

GARS News

March, 1994

GARS News

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The PRESIDENTS PEN by Howard Gould, W4NVF

I have been asked to share my thoughts about the club since I have been put into the position of making decisions for others. I took on this appointment as president because I know we basically have a good sound structure which needs some fine tuning.

I have been with the club only a couple of years, and have got a good understanding of where our troubles are, but dealing with them is another matter.

According to the bylaws, the clubs objective is to promote interest in amateur radio, public service, advancement of the radio art, maintaining fraternalism, high standards of conduct among ourselves, promote allied activities and encourage family participation in amateur radio activities.

The founders of the original club intended for us to have fun, be serious about public service, meet and enjoy our new found fellowships, and in general enjoy our hobby and get together at times to share our experiences with each other. I know we have endeavored to do all those things and more, but to me there is still not enough we are doing in some areas as others. For instance, public service is not a priority with us and frankly speaking we have a commitment with the county to give them emergency communications in order for us to keep our repeater sites and equipment the county has agreed to let us maintain and use. We are failing in that area and we must close the gap. I have personally maintained our contact with county government and I invite all ARES people to immediately set up a workable program to submit to the county, which is waiting for our response. Contact me for further details.

I want a repeater that is maintained all the time, not part time. I need people who are willing to commit their full attention to keeping our emergency link going one hundred percent at all times and we need to build on our communications plans in the way of putting on voting receivers to enlarge our area of communications. This will take some time and some expense but it needs to be done. But no matter what, we need to have our one main repeater up and run-

warm but mother nature played another game with us and because of high winds Charles Evans, WA4QYY who was heading up the party with John Scott, KD4VHG, called off the raising. But all was not lost because the hard line to the antenna from the repeater shack had not been tied down since the last antenna raising. This involved a neck cringing observation from the ground as we watched Charles, WA4QYY lower himself over the tower by rope so he could inch his way down 110 feet tying off the hardline to an existing pipe. When he had finished, we all breathed a sigh of relief knowing he was safely down. Thanks, Charles, nice job - well done.

The hams that attended the antenna party were besides Charles and John were Richard Barnes, W4IXN; Fred Runkle, K4KAZ; Larry Osborne, KD4QFD; Ike Chapman, KE4GYM; Duane Hansen, KD4KCR; Joe Biddle, AD4PZ; Bill Ahls, KE4EIH; Bob Hayden KE4GGN; Sid Weaver, who is waiting for his General Class ticket, and myself. Out of that crew we found out we have two more climbers - Bill, KE4EIH and Sid Weaver. Thanks to all who attended, we will keep you posted on the next attempt to raise the new antenna.

I was quite surprised to find so many hams at the site who had not seen the inside of a repeater shack, so we are going to make a video with Larry, KD4QFD taking the shots to be shown at a club meeting sometime in the near future.

David Adcock, KA4KKF our newly elected activities manager has some things planned for us in the way of ham related subjects which I know will be interesting and entertaining as well, and I am proposing to him that we have a little session with the newcomers each month at our meetings like a show and tell where they can pick up some infor-

President, Continued on P.2.



ning at full potential at all times. If our existing repeater committee members can not find the time for GARS, we will need to pursue other means as it is the responsibility of the club to maintain the communications link. The agreement is between GARS and the county. GARS is committed to give support to the ARES group and the county. We must have a full time crew on this without question.

On a more lighter note, on Saturday February 19th, there was an attempt to raise the new antenna up on top of the water tower at our main repeater site in Lawrenceville. The day was pretty and

GARS News

Gars News is the official monthly organ of the Gwinnett Amateur Radio Society serving its members and other persons interested in the advancement of the amateur radio art. Articles and submissions are invited and encouraged. Submit **News** items via the **GARS** conference of the Scientific Atlanta BBS (903-5487); on disk, tape or in writing to the Editor or Assistant Editor at their Roster address; via fax to 339-1394 or on packet to the AD4OD-3 PBBS on 145.07. Special arrangements can be made to accept dictation over the phone as well. Most DOS disk formats and file types can be read. Contact the Editor for odd format compatibility. Deadline for article submissions is the first Thursday of each month. The **GARS** address is:

GWINNETT AMATEUR RADIO SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 88
LILBURN, GA 30226

GARS OFFICERS FOR 1994-1995
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FIELD DAY: KD4VHG John Scott 978-0995
HAM CLASSES: KA9UIE Steve Idler 513-0428

GARS ASSOCIATED MEDIA
GARS 2 Meter FM repeater 147.075 MHz ⁴⁰⁰
GARS Conference in Sci-Atl phone BBS 903-5487
WA4IOB 6 Meter Beacon at 50.075 ^{MHz}
WD4JXR-6 / SNELLV Packet Node/Digipeater 147.03 ^{MHz}

SWAP, WANTED and SELL NET
Tuesdays at 9:00PM on the **GARS** Repeater. 147.075 ^{MHz}

MORSE CODE PRACTICE

An interactive Morse Code practice session immediately follows the 9:00P.M. Tuesday night net on the **GARS** repeater, and on Thursdays at 9:00P.M..

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

Remember, new members joining **GARS** between September 30th and April 1st can do so for 1/2 price:
\$12.50 for Individual Memberships
\$17.50 for Family Memberships

GARS W5YI-VEC TEST SESSION

4th Friday at St. John Neumann Church - 801 Tom Smith Rd, off Five Forks Tricukum Road, Lilburn. Contact Howie Gould, W4NVF at 921-8362. Walk-in Exams - Headphones!

GARS News EDITOR

Dean Matthews, AD4OD 962-8941

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Jack Herndon, KE4EMA 995-0438

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QUA

1st Tuesday,

Metro Atlanta Telephone Pioneers

Odd numbered months at Morrison's on Jimmy Carter Blvd at 7:30PM; Even numbered months at the Southern Bell Center at 12:00 Noon 145.41-

1st Wednesday - HamWatch

Shoney's 11690 Alpharetta Hwy., Roswell (about 2 1/2 miles North of Holcomb Bridge Rd across from North Fulton Hospital) Dinner at 6:30PM. Meeting is at 7:30 PM

1st Thursday

N.E. Georgia Amateur Radio Club

Jefferson Civic Center, off Memorial Dr. toward Winder from Jefferson. Dinner at 6:15. meeting is at 7:00PM. TI-147.225+

1st Thursday - Atlanta Radio Club

Days Inn at I-285 and Roswell Rd. Dinner at Old Hickory House at 6:00PM. Meeting is at 7:30PM TI-146.82-

2nd Wednesday

North Fulton Radio League

Cherokee Cattle Company, 11208 Alpharetta Hwy. Dinner at 6:00PM. Meeting at 7:30PM TI-145.47-

2nd Thursday

Alford Memorial Radio Club

Elks Lodge on Memorial Drive. Dinner at 6:00PM Meeting at 7:30PM. TI-146.76-

2nd Saturday

East Atlanta LAN

Scott Blvd Baptist Church in Decatur. Meeting is at 10:00AM. TI-145.41-

3rd Tuesday - Hamwatch

Shoney's 1949 Mountain Industrial Blvd, Tucker (Just North of Hwy. 78) Times: 6:30 PM for dinner prior to meeting. Meeting is at 7:30 PM.

3rd Thursday

Gwinnett Amateur Radio Society

Red Cross Building, Hi-Hope Rd off Hwy 316 in Lawrenceville. Fellowship dinner at Shoney's on Hwy 120, South of 316 at 6:00PM. Meeting is at 7:30PM

President Continued from P.1.

mation on operating hints, etc.

Joe Biddle, AD4PZ has agreed to take on the job of publicity manager for the club, and I know Joe will do a bang up job for us.

One of the areas we are weak in is the TVI committee. We don't have a valid committee, and this is an important function of our club. Whenever a member has a problem with TVI or other related interference, they should be able to come to the club for help. The FCC always looks favorably on the reports of a club TVI committee in reporting back to them. We have lots of expertise in these matters among club members, so please won't someone come forward and volunteer, we will need at least three hams, and the class of license is not important.

I have taken on this job with the hopes that we can generate some positive attitudes enabling us to move forward. We need positive constructive ideas that will benefit the members at large. I will be open minded to any criticism as long as it is followed by an idea or action that will make the club stronger. We may have to backpedal sometimes in order to correct mistakes we make, but that is not unusual in a club of this size. Remember that we are here to enjoy ourselves, and to share our experiences with each other, to meet new friends, share our knowledge, to help one another when the going gets rough. It is time for all of us to put aside our differences and feelings of discontent. Let's work with each other for a better club that is known for it's openness and helpful ways. Before I close, let me also say that we have many, many devoted members who will drop everything they are doing to help the club. I am very thankful to Steve Sims, KD4WAK who had devoted many hours to seeing that our CW Net continues, and to Ike Chapman, KE4GYM for running net control on the Information Want and Swap Net. But both these fine hams are looking for some help, won't someone volunteer to help them out?

I could go on, but our editor would not have enough room for his other columns. I hope to see you at the next GARS meeting. 73 Howie, W4NVF. ♦

GARS HAM OF THE MONTH

by Johnny Fearon, W4WKP

For this issue, we have chosen to write about one of our charter members, Jay Sager, WA4BXA.

It would never be fitting to write about Jay without including his wife Jean, KA4BNG, however. Jean is always at Jays side, helping him in every way, being his biggest cheerleader and also player on his team.

Jay was the Editor of the GARS News for a ten year period, back in the days when no one wanted to do it, and when it was hard to get anyone to volunteer to do anything.

He has been in Army MARS ever since he got his license in 1972. In MARS one of the positions he has held is small parts administrator.

Jay enjoys operation on HF as well as VHF. For VHF he and Jean together have about seven 2-meter rigs, some of them as old as 1972. Rigs of that vintage had positions for different crystal frequencies. Jay runs a Ten Tec Paragon on HF.

During a period of time when the club chose to have shirts made with the club logo, Jay and Jean handled the silk screening process for the shirts. They have brought chairs to the meetings and kept up the coffee for a number of years.

They have just recently purchased some land in Monroe, where Jay plans to retire, and graze, and do plenty of hamming. He has no dwelling at his farm, however he has already erected antennas for 40 and 80-meters as well as a tower. You can tell that Jay definitely has his priorities in order.

As I have written in previous columns, I still have a great appreciation for respect for the work the Sagers have done for GARS during the last twenty-plus years. ♦

THANKS TO:

- Jackie Calmbacher, for copying, collating and stapling the GARS NEWS, and to Chuck Calmbacher, AD4JU for marrying her.
- Contributors to this newsletter who are helping make it better by the month.
- Jud & Mary Whatley, for paper to print the News on.
- Richard Barnes W4IXN for repeater help.
- Duane Hansen, KD4KCR for joining the Repeater Committee and his help with the hardline patch this month.
- Ike Chapman, KE4GYM for his services as Net Control for the Tuesday night net. ♦

FEBRUARY MEETING

The February meeting was a full house again, with quite a few visitors.

The meeting was officer election night, followed by an excellent video on grounding techniques. Only a bunch of hams would get enjoyment over a video such as this!

Arnold Solomon, KC4ZUA outgoing activities manager even brought along the popcorn so we could pretend we were at Mall Corners 6.

The pre-meeting gathering at Shoney's was also well attended and enjoyed by all... come join us before the meetings for our informal fellowship dinner. We are not locked into Shoney's, by the way, direct suggestions about alternate dining locales to Howie, W4NVF AKA "The Prez." ♦

MORSE MAN NEEDED

Steve, KD4WAK, needs someone to help out with sending code practice on Thursday nights. If you have the capability to send out code via computer and are interested please contact Steve on

the GARS repeater or send me a message and I will be happy to relay the message.

Also, if anyone is interested in helping out with the GARS Want, Swap, Sell, and Information Net on Tuesday nights please let me know. I can be reached on the GARS conference of the Sci-Atl BBS, on the GARS repeater, phone (339-8123), or email at ike@lx.com .

Thanks, 73 de Ike, KE4GYM

LEGISLATIVE HELP

Jim Altman, N4UCK, ARRL Section Manager has introduced legislation that would ELIMINATE restrictive covenants with respect to amateur radio antennas. House Bill 1134 would exempt amateur radio antennas from such protective covenants. Please write and call your state representative and state senator and URGE them to support this legislation. They need to understand the value of amateur radio to the community in times of emergency and that our avocational interests provide a huge, highly trained pool of communications experts whenever they are needed for local, regional and national emergencies. Jim was imminently successful in defeating unreasonable restrictions on amateur towers in Fulton County and we can help him be successful again.

Yes, this is a repeat from last months News. It is important and worth a reminder about. - ED ♦

Every great scientific truth goes through three stages: first, people say it conflicts with the Bible. Next they say it had been discovered before. Lastly, they say they always believed it.

Jean Louis Agassiz (1807-1883)

The end of science is not to prove a theory, but to improve mankind.

Manly P. Hall (born 1901)

BIRTHDAYS IN APRIL

7th	KD4HMC	Sam Roundtree
8th	N4KHV	Don Burch
9th	KC4RWF	Chris Meadows
11th	KN4DY	Randy Tonne
15th	KD4DLY	Kathie Bennett
18th	WA4IZI	Stan McDonald
25th	AC4UR	Tom Henderson
28th	AD4LY	Stephen Burel
29th	NZ3I	Tad Danley

Not on the list or wrong date? Let us know! Ed.♦

NEW CALLS & UPGRADES
HARD WORK REWARDED

Joe Biddle, who we have all come to know as KR4IK, after a long awaited period is now and forevermore AD4PZ. Congratulations, Joe on making it to Extra Class.

Mary Stowell has passed through General Class in written tests, and is working on her code.

Jim Baker, KC4YBQ has passed written elements through Advanced and is poised to pounce on his 13 WPM code, if he could just find an unlocked testing area.... hang in there Jim!

Sid Weaver is waiting for his General Class ticket. Sid passed all the elements to achieve this in one sitting, his first test. Attaboy Sid!

Don Ennest, KE4GGP has passed the 5 wpm code to earn his Technician-Plus upgrade.

And last but by no means least, Marty Ernst, KD4HLV has passed his elements to upgrade from Technician to General Class.

If you have passed a test element and not been recognized, please let us know. We want to share the good news with all our members! -Ed. ♦

Editors Note: Many of you have heard that there is a possibility of my being transferred to Racine, Wisconsin. Well the two week trip I took to the new plant allayed those plans for now, and I am quite glad. Upon arriving at Racine, I drove to our factory and arrived there by 9:30 a.m. At noon, when I got ready to go to lunch, I found that it had snowed over a foot! These people are so used to this sort of thing that they didn't even mention it was snowing! The next day on the way in, I noticed some little flags on poles, sticking up from the snow. It wasn't until the next week, when some of the snow had melted, that I discovered the flags were attached to fire hydrants, so the firemen can find them in the deep snow.

It snowed almost two feet while I was there. I appreciate a good snow like anybody, but after scraping ice off my windows every day for two weeks, slipping and sliding all over the parking lot each morning I was getting a little testy. When I realized that it snows so much there so often that they have to take precautions like those little flags, I realized Racine was not for me. I am glad my trip was in the spring rather in the summer, when I could have been duped. - Dean, AD4OD (Suwanee Resident)♦

ACTIVITIES FOR MARCH

by David Adcock, KA4KKF

This months program is on contests and upcoming contests. Why do we have them and why are they fun? Question and answer time will follow break.

April is Hat/Badge Night. Wear your best!!!!

Come Join the fun, you may find the answers to your questions or provide the answers for someone else.

Don't forget the hamfest in Marietta March 19.

NEW OFFICERS ELECTED

The membership of GARS, in its infinite wisdom, elected the following to office at the February meeting.

GARS OFFICERS FOR 1994-1995

President:	W4NVF	Howard Gould	921-8362
Vice President:	KD4QFD	Larry Osborne	972-1185
Secretary:	KE4GYM	Ike Chapman	339-8123
Treasurer:	WA4QYY	Charles Evans	448-0930
Activities Mgr:	KA4KKF	David Adcock	963-5767
License Trustee:	KO4ZS	Paul Bennett	206-0215
Editor:	AD4OD	Dean Matthews	962-8941

Please support your new officers, and help them make GARS better. Everybody has talents to share, let the appropriate official know your talent and ability so that they can let you help the club. ♦

GARS ACTIVITIES QUESTIONNAIRE

Our new Activities Manager, David Adcock KA4KKF is like a thoroughbred racehorse at the starting gate, raring to go. But he wants some input from you, the members to see what directions you would like him to go.

Take a minute and fill out this form, so he can get an idea of the kinds of projects you would like to be involved in as a club.

Do it! Fill out the form! This is not some tiresome poll from a faceless company trying to sell you something, this is *your* radio club trying to find your interests and desires so we can do things you like!

If you would rather, mail it to the GARS post office box listed on page 2. Send it to David Adcock's attention, or you could send it right to his address in the GARS roster.

If you don't want to deface this beautiful publication by tearing out the form, photocopy it, or just write the information on a piece of paper, but just *DO IT!* -ED. ♦

GARS ACTIVITIES

CALL: _____ PHONE#: _____

NAME: _____

ACTIVITIES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE AND TO PARTICIPATE.

1. _____ 7. _____
2. _____ 8. _____
3. _____ 9. _____
4. _____ 10. _____
5. _____ 11. _____
6. _____ 12. _____

WOULD YOU LIKE A ONCE A MONTH SATURDAY MORNING BREAKFAST
GET TOGETHER? _____ Time: _____ (NOTHING FORMAL)

WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEARN HOW TO RUN THE TUESDAY NIGHT NET? _____

WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES?

1. ARES _____
2. REPEATER MAINTENANCE _____
3. COMMUNICATIONS FOR SPECIAL EVENTS _____
4. TAILGATE (HAMFEST, 1 DAY) _____

AMATEUR RADIO CONSIST OF SOME OF THE FOLLOWING:
PACKET, SATELLITES, HF CONTEST, VHF CONTEST, RAG CHEWING, REMOTE CONTROL
AIRCRAFT, FOX HUNTING, SSTV, ATV, OPERATING SPECIAL EVENTS (BIKE RIDES,
OLYMPICS, SCITREK) PUBLIC SERVICE (ARES, MARS), CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS (RADIOS,
ANTENNAS), REPEATERS, MICROWAVES, MOONBOUNCE, ETC. ETC.

IF YOU DON'T SEE OR HEAR ABOUT IT, ASK FOR IT. YOU MAY FIND SOME INTEREST
ABOUT IT. THERE IS PLENTY TO DO AND MORE TO COME WITH TECHNOLOGY. AMATEUR
RADIO IS FUN. IT WILL PROBABLY TAKE A LIFETIME TO EXPERIENCE IT ALL. TURN
IN AT THE MARCH MEETING OR MAIL TO THE CLUB.

DAVID (KA4KKF)

NEWCOMER'S GUIDE TO AMATEUR RADIO EQUIPMENT

by Vince Yakamavich, AA4MY

I recently overheard two fairly new-to-the-hobby Amateurs discussing (bemoaning) the high cost of Amateur Radio gear, specifically HF transceivers. They were discussing top brands, and top-of-the-line models. (Sorta like two teenagers with newly-earned learner's permits, bemoaning the prohibitive costs surrounding Porsche 924's...) "You really can't get much for under \$1,000," said they. "Horse-feathers!" sez I.

Many new Amateurs mistakenly assume that they have no choice but to begin with a tired old used QRP CW transceiver, a wire dipole antenna, and perhaps a used handheld rig for VHF/UHF. This may be the case if you're simply flat broke and have no way to raise cash for a decent station, but there are many possibilities if you allow your creativity, determination, and logic to prevail. And you won't have to "homebrew" your entire station (unless you want to)!

Over the past 10 years, there has been a virtual explosion in electronic technology. The technology of "yesterday" (tubes, and linear VFO's) have been replaced with ultra-sophisticated, computerized, marvels of engineering and packaging technology (for which, we pay most dearly). But let's look seriously at some of those "antiques" of the late 70's and early 80's (which are now in the \$400 - \$800 range). Did they work? Most assuredly. How well did they work? Many a DXCC and 5 band WAS earned, with untold millions of hours of enjoyment, to boot!

Unfortunately, newcomers won't find ads for the "antiques" in today's Amateur Radio mags. All they see are the ads for the new, (multi) kilo-buck transceivers from Japan Inc.

After reading some of the spec sheets on the new rigs, a newcomer to the hobby will probably think I'm off my rocker when I say most of the "features" found on the new HF rigs in the kilo-buck range are USELESS!

Just for an example, let's talk about "digital VFO's" and "memories". A

"digital VFO" is in actuality, a frequency synthesizer. Synthesizers are characterized by extreme frequency stability (a very desirable trait), on the order of 20 Hz or less per hour (based on thermal changes in the crystal time base). But let's look at some of those "antiques". They, too, can boast of frequency stability. Like 100 Hz or so per hour. "But," you say, "that's FIVE TIMES WORSE than what a new rig can do!" And you're absolutely correct. But the key question is: "Will you notice 100 Hz per hour drift?" Using a tight CW filter, yes, you would--after perhaps a FULL HOUR QSO. On SSB, you'd probably want to touch the frequency knob after about 2 HOURS of rag-chewing! Yes, those older rigs sure made Amateur Radio operating rough...

"But the new rig offers 100 "memories", while some of the "antiques" don't even offer a digital display!" Yup, you're right again! But remember, unlike the VHF/UHF FM spectrum, HF is not "channelized". HF stations will be scattered randomly on the band--NEVER will you find them exactly where you programmed your memory for yesterday!. Net operation?? "Plus or Minus QRM" is often heard on many an HF net preamble. Your HF "memory" will NEVER get you exactly on the frequency of your favorite net. You'll always be tuning up and down the band anyway. Unless you plan to make heavy use of autostart RTTY, HF packet, or AMTOR, I doubt you'll ever need a memory on HF.

Keyboard entry of frequency? Perhaps good to get you in the desired band segment, but not much more.

Digital display? Impressive to look at, and perhaps nice to have. But crystal calibrators (about \$20 to build, if your "antique" doesn't already have one built in) and mechanical displays have been the frequency reference for years--and yes, the new rigs' high-tech synthesizers have to be calibrated against WWV, just like the \$20 calibrator...

Solid state finals versus tubes. No doubt about it, tubes are getting more difficult to find. But they CAN be found. "Tubes are expensive!" Yes they are--but YOU can replace them. Ever try to get 4 matched RF type transistors?

Ever changed a set mounted in a heat-sink buried within the bowels of a tightly packed maze where even Japanese-sized fingers fear to go? More likely than not, the average Amateur wouldn't even ATTEMPT to replace the finals in a solid state rig (IF he could find a matched replacement set!), while changing a tube presents little, if any, problem. Tubes have other advantages, too. They're infinitely more forgiving when it comes to that "ideal" 50 ohm resistive match we Amateurs are always seeking, but seldom attain. At 2:1 SWR, a tube will work just fine--a newer rig will probably go into a limited "foldback" to protect the transistors. Three to one?? Tubes are still perkin' along...Transistor? Forget it!

One disadvantage though: You will have to learn to peak the grid, and dip the plate. Hand-eye coordination. Watch the meter--twist the knob. Yup, those "Amateurs of olden days" sure had it rough...

Speech compressor? Some DXers swear by 'em. Most rag-chewers swear AT 'em! If you need one, they exist as after-market devices for the older rigs, not to mention the "build your own" method.

Suffice to say, a lot of the features on the newer rigs amount to high priced, useless frills.

What newcomers in quest of a good HF rig REALLY need to do is seek out an EXPERIENCED Amateur who has knowledge about the older rigs. Ask what kind of rig they use. Ask what they like or dislike about it. Most Amateurs are delighted to show off their shack, and give you hands-on exposure to their setups.

I'd recommend any of the following, as they were the "standard of performance" in that "classic" age of 10 or more years ago. Most can be found in hamfests or in trader publications for around \$200 - \$600. Collins KWM-2A, Drake TR4-C, & TR-7 transceivers; Collins S Line, Drake T4C, R4C (separate Receiver & transmitter). Again, these were the "Cadillacs" of 10 or so years ago. Solid, proven performers, and parts still readily available.

Be cautious though--not all the rigs in this era were gems. Although

some of their rigs were winners, manufacturers such as SWAN, National, EICO, et al., have had models that left a sour taste in the Amateur community. Until you're more knowledgeable about the ins and outs of specific models, stick to the "Cadillacs" like Collins & Drake.

Got a little more to spend? Icom 745 (my current HF rig), Kenwood TS-830, TS-430. \$600 - \$800 range. SOLID performers (even if they ARE transistorized!).

Just for fun, let me play devil's advocate. Lets assume that you, Joe New Ham, just HAS to have that kilo-buck+ special. It's a steep price to pay, no argument. But the thing you have to keep in mind is that the cost of this hobby is mostly "up-front money." In the long run, Amateur Radio is NOT that expensive when you look at dollar cost versus hours of enjoyment.

Let's compare it to some other hobbies: Bowling--pretty inexpensive, eh? After you buy your equipment (about \$75 or so), you can look forward to dropping an additional \$10 or so every time you visit the lanes for a couple hours of fun. A couple times a week, over the course of a SINGLE YEAR, you've already paid MORE than that new transceiver costs! Do you enjoy going to the movies? Add this up: \$5-\$6 admission, \$2-\$5 for refreshments, that's \$7-\$11 per film, and if you go just once a week it works out to \$350-\$550 per year...add a date and double it...about an hour and a half of entertainment each week for perhaps \$1,000! And don't forget the hassles of parking, waiting in line, etc. What about golf? You pay greens fees, and you're limited to daylight and (for all but the fanatics) fair weather. Not so with HF Amateur Radio. Twenty-four hours a day, rain or shine, you can sit down and enjoy your INVESTMENT, making new friends, learning about faraway places, and perhaps helping others in life-threatening situations.

Compare your Amateur Radio hobby. Say you spend even \$5,000 on a transceiver, antenna, tower, tuner, power supply, coaxial cables, rotator, and miscellaneous accessories for the shack. Let's say the setup lasts five years (conservatively) before you want to

make any major changes. Five grand works out to \$1,000 a year, or \$20 a week for unlimited hours of operating and providing a valued public service. Even if you add more extras, like a good keyer, handheld VHF radios, club dues, magazine subscriptions, reference books, tools, license upgrade preparation tapes, packet TNCs, backup power generators, mobile gear, and a cheap computer, it's still a fairly inexpensive hobby over the long haul. No to mention the fact that you'll probably recoup 30-50% (or more) of your investment if you decide to sell your equipment used at a later date. So, for a net outlay equivalent to maybe \$10-\$25 a week, you can be a "complete Amateur."

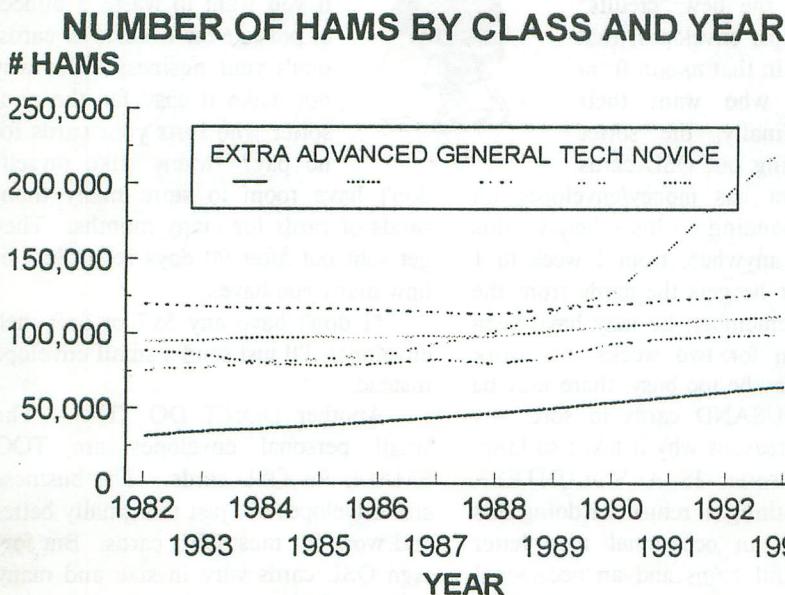
If you're still doubtful about the hobby, seek out an experienced Amateur to consult and/or go shopping with, and go for one of the "classics" of recent time. Get on the air. It won't take you long to become hooked on HF operating. It's day and night compared to VHF repeater operation. Besides, you'll always be able to sell it at a hamfest if you ever lose interest. But if you're convinced that Amateur Radio is for YOU, then go ahead and look at those kilo-buck+ specials, visit your friendly Credit Union if necessary, and GO FOR IT. ♦

THE ARRL INCOMING QSL BUREAU SYSTEM

Within the U.S. and Canada, the ARRL DX QSL Bureau System is made up of numerous call area bureaus that act as central clearing houses for QSLs arriving from foreign countries. These "incoming" bureaus are staffed by volunteers. The service is free and ARRL membership is not required.

How it Works Most countries have "outgoing" QSL bureaus that operate in much the same manner as the ARRL Outgoing QSL Service. The member sends his cards to his outgoing bureau where they are packaged and shipped to the appropriate countries. A majority of the DX QSLs are shipped directly to the individual incoming bureaus where volunteers sort the incoming QSLs by the first letter of the call sign suffix. One individual may be assigned the responsibility of handling from one or more letters of the alphabet. Operating costs are funded from ARRL membership dues.

The chart below shows some interesting licensing data about the number of U.S. hams licensed for each class and year since 1982. The data in it is from the W5YI Report, and was created with Lotus Freelance Graphics. -ED.



Claiming your QSLs

Send a 5 x 7-1/2 or 6 x 9 inch self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) to the bureau serving your call-sign district. Neatly print your call-sign in the upper left corner of the envelope. A suggested way to send envelopes is to affix a first class stamp and clip extra postage to the envelope. Then, if you receive more than 1 oz. of cards, they can be sent in the single package.

Some incoming bureaus sell envelopes or postage credits in addition to the normal SASE handling. They provide the proper envelope and postage upon the prepayment of a certain fee. The exact arrangements can be obtained by sending your inquiry with a SASE to your area bureau. A list of bureaus appears below. Helpful Hints

Good cooperation between the DXer and the bureau is important to ensure a smooth flow of cards. Remember that the people who work in the area bureaus are volunteers. They are providing you with a valuable service. With that thought in mind, please pay close attention to the following DOs and DON'Ts.

DOs:

DO keep self-addressed 5 x 7-1/2 or 6 x 9 inch envelopes on file at your bureau, with your call in the upper left corner, and affix at least one unit of first-class postage. * DO send the bureau enough postage to cover SASEs on file and enough to take care of possible postage rate increases. * DO respond quickly to any bureau request for SASEs, stamps or money. Unclaimed card backlogs are the bureau's biggest problem. * DO notify the bureau of your new call as you upgrade. Please send SASEs with new call, in addition to SASEs with old call. * DO include a SASE with any information request to the bureau. * DO notify the bureau in writing if you don't want your cards.

DON'Ts

DON'T send domestic US to US cards to your call-area bureau. * DON'T expect DX cards to arrive for several months after the QSO. Overseas delivery is very slow. Many cards coming from overseas bureaus are over a year

old. * DON'T send your outgoing DX cards to your call-area bureau, * DON'T send SASEs to your "portable" bureau. For example, AA2Z/1 sends SASEs to the W2 bureau, not the W1 bureau. * DON'T send SASEs to the ARRL Outgoing QSL Service. ARRL INCOMING DX QSL BUREAU ADDRESSES

Fourth Call Area: All single-letter prefixes (K4, N4, W4) -

Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Club
P.O. Box DX
Charlotte, NC 28220

Fourth Call Area: All two-letter prefixes (AA4, KB4, NC4, WD4, etc.)

Sterling Park Amateur Radio Club
Call Box 599
Sterling Park, VA 22170

This article is one of the best we have seen about the incoming QSL bureau. Unfortunately we do not know who to credit for it as it was unsigned on a shareware CD-ROM -Ed.

EVERYTHING YOU EVER
WANTED TO KNOW
ABOUT BUREAUS
BUT
WERE AFRAID TO ASK

by Diana L. Syriac, KC1SP

For the betterment of all hams out there, I'll relate a few things about the Incoming QSL bureau. I am a sorter (i.e., I'm one of the ones that sends hams their foreign QSL cards from the bureau), so I do have first hand knowledge of this. Note that all bureaus and sorters are slightly different, but most of this applies to all.

*How long DOES it take to get a card through the QSL bureau???

The AVERAGE time is 6 months to a year. I've seen cards come through in as little as 3 months....but not often...I've also seen cards come through TEN YEARS LATER...but not often. Two years is not an unusual time, so do be patient.

*Why does it take so long????

Well, let's start at the beginning, the FOREIGN ham. Definitely, you won't see a card until he sends one out. And some don't do this but once every three months, where they might sit down and send out all the QSL contacts they've made in the past three months. Some foreign hams wait YEARS before

sending out their QSL cards!!! Then we have the FOREIGN QSL bureaus. Many foreign QSL bureaus don't send the cards until they have a specified amount, for example 10 pounds going to the US. This may take six months to build up that amount, and if your card happens to come in right after they just shipped a bunch....well, you figure it out.

*Eventually, it reaches the incoming QSL bureau. You get them in a few days, right?

*WRONG! Next, the incoming QSL bureau does a "primary sort" to separate the QSL cards into 26 letters, the letter immediately after the number. Now, these "letter" cards have to get to the letter sorter (like me) somehow. Either the sorter goes to pick them up, or the cards are delivered to an intermediary, who delivers them to another intermediary, who calls the letter sorter, who comes to pick up his cards. Up until 6 months ago, there were two intermediaries between me and the QSL bureau. Now there is only one. But figure one to three months between the time when the cards get to the QSL bureau and the time it gets to the sorter.

OK, now the letter sorter does a "secondary sort" to sort the QSL cards by the SECOND letter after the number (or first/second letter before the number for 2x1 calls). The letter sorter also has to process all the new "credits" (cash, stamps, envelopes) that have come in that month from US hams who want their cards. Finally, the sorter starts sending out QSL cards IF the ham has money/envelopes on hand. Depending on his schedule, this may occur anywhere from 1 week to 1 month after he gets the cards from the bureau. Remember, he may have been on vacation for two weeks, his work schedule may be too busy, there may be three THOUSAND cards to sort, any number of reasons why it takes so long. The letter sorter IS A VOLUNTEER and gets nothing in return for doing this job....except an occasional nice letter from thankful hams and an occasional nastygram from those not so thankful

hams who think THEY know better than he how to do his job.

If you add all those times up, you'll see why it takes an average of 6 months to a year.

*OK, assuming that the letter sorter does get QSL cards for me, do I get them immediately?

Not necessarily. Different sorters work differently. I used to send ALL QSL cards out if the ham had an envelope on hand. But after getting a number of nastygrams complaining about only one QSL card in the envelope, I have changed my methods. Now, I send out cards if there is an ounce of cards (about 5) OR if I've held the one or two cards for 90 days. I figure if I've held it for 90 days and there are no more coming in, the ham probably still wants the cards. I have a few hams who have specifically requested that I send their cards every month regardless of how many they have, and I do this.

*Oh, gee, you HOLD cards? Then I'll just put 5 ounces of postage on and let you send me the cards when you get 5 ounces worth!

DON'T DO THIS, PLEASE!!!! When sending in envelopes, ALWAYS only place one ounce of postage on the envelope. Sure, send along extra postage or cash for additional ounces or



postal increases, but don't attach it to the envelopes. Remember, it's your money, and if you want to waste 5 ounces of postage on 1 ounce of cards, that's your business. But why not make it easy for the poor sorter who sorts your cards for no pay? Many (like myself)

don't have room to store many thousands of cards for many months. They get sent out after 90 days regardless of how many you have.

*I don't have any 5x7 or 6x9 inch envelopes, I'll just send a small envelope instead.

Another DON'T DO THIS. The small personal envelopes are TOO SMALL for QSL cards. The business size envelopes are just marginally better and work for most QSL cards. But foreign QSL cards vary in size and many will not fit in a standard business size envelope either. If you're looking for a

better compromise, there's some over-size business size envelopes that are about 1/2" larger, or use number 6 size envelopes (Christmas card size envelopes). Obviously, I prefer 5x7 or 6x9 inch envelopes, since they are easier to keep track of.

The other alternative is to let the sorter "buy" envelopes for you. Most (not all) bureaus will allow you to send in money instead of envelopes. The sorter then charges a set fee (for our bureau, it's 10 cents an envelope or 3 for 25 cents) for envelopes. And before you croak about how expensive that is, check the local prices of 6x9 inch envelopes....I think I saw at the local store three 6x9 inch envelopes for 79 cents.....I'm really making a bundle on selling envelopes, aren't I?

*What happens to QSL cards if the ham doesn't have any money/envelopes at the sorter?

This varies. But, most sorters will hold the cards for up to 45 days. After this point, they will get disposed (thrown away) or sent back to the QSL bureau. Some sorters may send out postcards to notify the ham that he has cards on file; I do. However, if the ham doesn't respond IMMEDIATELY, the cards will get destroyed. Figure there is

about 3 month return-trip between the time you send something to the QSL bureau and the time the sorter actually receives it, so don't expect your cards within a month. I hold cards for about 90 days, then throw them away. I have some "accounts" that I don't even hold them for 90 days. These are hams that I've sent a postcard to in the past and got no response....or got a response that says "I don't QSL, don't bother me!" No interest in QSL cards, so out they go. This means that when you change your address or call, send your new address to the bureau! If the cards bounce due to "Address Unknown", you'll receive no more cards and cards will not be stored for future posterity.

*What do I do when I get a new callsign?

Send the QSL bureau a letter indicating your OLD callsign(s) and your new callsign. The "old" sorter will transfer your account to the "new" sorter. It will take a couple extra months the first time, but then it will settle down again.

*I sent some envelopes in to the bureau a year ago and still haven't received any cards, what do I do?

I'd say be patient and wait longer. Maybe there were no QSL cards for you.

The envelopes/money is still there, so you should be set. HOWEVER, if you wish to find out what your "account" is like, ASK. Send a self-addressed Stamped Envelope (this can be any size, but business envelope is best, cuz you might get some enclosed QSL cards with your response!) and ASK for the status of your account. You can also ask for information on the incoming and/or outgoing bureau at the same time. I have flyers that describe both of these. And if you're smart, you might also send along a dollar at the same time to update your account....JUST IN CASE you're receiving no cards because there is no money in your account! I mean really, you can afford a dollar, right?

Do keep in mind that QSL bureaus are human too. Sometimes they lose money/envelopes. This happened to me once. The bureau "found" the lost envelope behind a sorting box six months later. Meanwhile, I coughed up the cash from my personal checking account, figuring it was I that had lost the money. Sorters are very nice persons in general.

Treat yours nice, and you'll get good service. Hope I answered all your questions (and more!).♦

GARS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (SHORT FORM)

Amateur Callsign: _____

Class: _____ Expires: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work-Phone: _____ Fax-Phone: _____

Type of membership: []-Individual []-Family

ARRL Member? Y/N _____ Life? Y/N _____

Additional members for Family Memberships:

NAME: _____

CALLSIGN: _____

CLASS (circle 1)

E A G T+ T N _____ / / Y/N Y/N

E A G T+ T N _____ / / Y/N Y/N

E A G T+ T N _____ / / Y/N Y/N

Check Interests:

[]-Class instruction []-Field Day operation []-Repeater maintenance []-Gars club booth staffing []-Community events
 []-Emergency []-Administrative []-Fund raisers

[]Other _____

Dues:\$25.00 for Individual Memberships
 \$35.00 for Family Memberships

From April 1 to Sept 30: \$12.50 for Individual Memberships
 \$17.50 for Family Memberships

Mail your completed application with check made out to GARS to: Gwinnett Amateur Radio Society, PO Box 88 Lilburn, Ga 30226

Atlanta Metro Area VE/VEC Examination Schedules From SERA Repeater Journal and other sources. Published as a service to its members, GARS assumes no responsibility for errors or schedule changes. Call and confirm schedules before going.

1st Saturday - Clayton Co. Emergency Mgmt Bldg 9:00AM
7496 N. McDonough St. Jonesboro
George White, KN4NK 361-6350 Walk-In Exams

1st Sunday - Lawrenceville W5YI-VEC - Jackson EMC 2:00PM
461 Swanson Rd - L'ville - Walk-In Exams
Duane Reynolds, WB2YAD 952-2582

1st Monday - Roswell CA-VEC 7:00PM
St Anni Catholic Church - 4905 Roswell Rd - Marietta
Delaine McCarthy, KM4FV 993-9758

2nd Tuesday - Walton EMC 7:00PM
3645 - Lenora Church Rd, Snellville - Walk-In Exams
Wayne Taylor, WD4CCA 498-7759

2nd Saturday - Stn Mn CA-VEC 8:30AM
Stone Mountain-Methodist Church
Hal Martin, K14RD - 439-6430 Walk-In Exams

3rd Saturday - Marietta First United Methodist Church
56 Whitlock Ave, Room 319
Larry Huff, WA4CQZ - 956-3171

2nd Sundays - First Presbyterian Church
183 West Main Street, Cartersville
Mark Swicord, KD4EYF - 975-1039 Walk-In Exams

4th Friday GARS W5YI-VEC - 7:00PM - St John Neumann Church
801 Tom Smith Rd, off Five Forks Trickum Rd, Lilburn
Howie Gould, W4NVF 921-8362 Walk-In Exams - Headphones!

4th Sunday N Atlanta ARRL-VEC - Episcopal Church of the Atonement
2:30PM Highpoint Rd, Atlanta
Neil Foster, KC4MJ - 449-3340 Walk-In Exams

HAMFEST CALENDAR

March	19 .. Kennebogee ARC, Marietta, GA
March	19-20 Swapfest, Ft. Walton Beach, FL
March	25-26 Hamfest - Columbus, GA
March	27 .. Hamfest - Kingston, NC
April	9 .. Hamfest - Albertville, AL
April	9 .. Hamfest - Perry GA
April	9 .. Hamfest - Oak Ridge, TN
April	9-10 Hamfest - Gainesville, FL
April	10? Hamfest - Clarkesville, TN
April	16 .. TARC Electronics Fest - Summerville, SC
April	17?.. Hamfest - Talledega, AL
April	29- until - May 1
May 42nd Hamvention - Dayton, OH
May	14-15 Hamfest Toccoa - Hartwell GA
May	14-15 Hamfest - Birmingham, AL

?=Date not confirmed. Several entries taken from SERA Journal.
Georgia locations are bold, Atlanta locations are bold and underlined

GARS News
Gwinnett Amateur Radio Society
P.O. Box 88
Lilburn, Ga 30226

